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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: FINLAND: OPPOSING IRAN PRESIDENCY AT UNDP

REF: STATE 01500

¶1. (SBU) PolOff discussed the Iranian candidacy for UNDP President with Marko Laine, Counselor, Unit for Development Issues (UNDP Desk for Finland). He plans to discuss the candidacy further with the political section at the Finnish MFA, but noted that their unofficial position will be to vote in favor of the candidacy; they acknowledge US concern but based on the UNICEF experience with Iran in a leadership role, do not foresee Iran politicizing this venue.

¶2. (SBU) Laine also stated that they hope this would not go to secret ballot as that is unprecedented. He also commented that Iran has no special status in the UN at this time that provides a formal reason to block them; such as boycott or security resolutions. Laine noted that UNDP connotes only "mild" political action and addresses strictly social development.

¶3. (SBU) Government of Finland (GoF) does not yet have the EU official position on the vote. The EU is expected to coordinate its position today or tomorrow morning and the GoF prefers to join a unified EU position.  
BARRETT